

ONE MORE WRINKLE IN THE BROW OF OLD FATHER TIME

Celebration of the Beginning of the New Year As Seen in Ancient and Modern Times.

At 12 o'clock tonight citizens of Washington who seek downy couches before that hour will be in danger of having their dreams disturbed by horn blasts, whistle tooting, and discharge of pistols by other and more enthusiastic of their townspeople who insist upon dramatic means of ushering in the new year. Tomorrow will be New Year Day, and promises to be as quiet as becomes so aged a day, but developments may be expected at midnight to mark the death of old Nineteen Hundred and Two, an opportunity which old and young America never fails to take advantage of under cover of night. On the Fourth of July a diligent police service is careful not to have more than the ordinary number and character of pyrotechnic manifestations, but anybody who is so disposed may perch himself in his top-story window and fire away to his heart's content. Anything so alluring as 365 days—days redolent with the possibilities of many things—undoubtedly deserves a welcome, and to the best of his ability the true American citizen will offer it. In some cases the welcome of firearms may not be the citizen's favorite mode of celebrating, but when offered from a top-story window it is, at least, the safest.

The chief event of importance New Year Day is the old custom of paying calls. While this is continued, to some extent, it is by no means as popular as in years past. The reception by the President and his wife at the White House is a time-honored custom, which will probably live on for many years to come. It is the first, and in many instances, the only opportunity the public-at-large has to greet the Chief Executive and his wife, and hundreds of people stand in line for hours that they may take advantage of the privilege.

Customs of Today.
Time was when the day was anticipated for weeks by male and matron not conspicuous in so-called social circles, for it afforded both a time to greet all their male friends and those of their assistants. It was a matter of pride to the younger girls to be able to show a greater number of cards the next day than could be displayed by their friends. That day is past, however, for Washington society has become so cosmopolitan that many are received within its limits who would have no claim to social recognition in other places. For the rest, the New Year reception has no charms. The American girl is far too busy giving a good account of herself these days to idle away her time in dreams of a thing which counts for nothing to herself or to anybody else, and the custom is fast dying out. With it will go a feature of life among the early Dutch settlers of New York, with whom the New Year call was original. In those days January 1 was set aside as the one day in the year given exclusively to the men to make calls upon their women friends, and the latter were expected to remain at home and do the duty of hostesses to all of them. That is the only known custom peculiar to the Dutch which has been known to survive.

An English Ceremony.
England is, however, responsible for a quaint, interesting, and existing ceremony, so to speak—watching out the old year and welcoming in the new. Americans have added their own ideas in this regard to the original one of the Britons and various forms of saying "good-by" to the old year are observed here. Dances, parties of all kinds, and "watch meetings" are held that the dying year's last moments may not be lonely ones. When the hour of midnight comes America asserts itself first with audible evidences of its joy, followed by secret resolutions for the new year which might have been made with impunity on any other day in the year.

While in almost every country in the world New Year is celebrated, customs differ as well as time. Many nations do not regard January 1 as the first day of the year, and so observe it on the day which corresponds to that date with Americans and other enlightened countries. To the French it is the great social event of the year, and all society meets on a common basis. It is not an unusual thing to see representatives of totally different rank and social standing greeting each other in the most effusive and familiar way, extending the greetings of the new season and recognizing each other as equals.

Superstitious Features.
There are many superstitious features of the feast throughout England, one of which is that in order to insure good luck to a household, the first person to enter on the New Year must be a man. When the master of the house enters for the first time he must bring in something which he did not take out.

Chances for good fortune in Ireland, according to an old superstition, are fewer than in most countries for there the first person who comes into one's home must be possessed of virtue and innocence, whether it be man, woman, or child.

The Persians observe the day by liberating prisoners, and forgiving wrongdoers. An old custom, which still prevails there is the "Game of the Beardless Rider." This is performed by a deformed man being shaved clean, and having his face painted in variegated colors riding through the streets on an ass, followed by a hooting, jeering crowd of the unwashed.

The mistletoe, which has so much significance to the young man and maid in holiday time, is a relic of an old New Year custom among the Druids. Beneath

the oak where the mistletoe grew, they would prepare a banquet and sacrifice. A Druid priest in white gown would climb the tree, cut away the mistletoe with a golden sickle, and receive it into a white cloak. This ceremony would be followed by the sacrifice. The mistletoe has been borrowed from the Druids without the rest of their program. It is no protest from presiding officer at the feast nor the victim.

Watch Meetings Tonight.
The time-honored custom of watching the old year out and the new year in will be observed in hundreds of homes and places of worship tonight.

As usual a New Year Eve watch night service will be held in the auditorium at the Central Union Mission. It will begin at 7:30 o'clock and continue until 12:05 a. m., with a change of leaders each hour.

There will be a union watch night service at Wesley Chapel, Fifth and F Streets northwest on New Year Eve. The congregations of several other churches will unite with that of the chapel. Among these will be the members of the First Presbyterian, Assembly Presbyterian, Central Presbyterian, Temple Baptist and St. Paul's English Lutheran Churches.

The Rev. Fred W. Moot, pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, will preach at 11 o'clock, and this service will be continued until the new year comes in. A Young People's meeting will begin at 9:30 o'clock in the chapel also.

Epworth M. E. Church will hold services beginning at 11 o'clock.

Arrangements have been made with "Father Time" for the proper introduction of the New Year by the United States Naval Observatory in this city. A series of telegraphic signals will be sent out from the observatory tonight, beginning at 11:55 and ending at midnight, and will be similar to those sent every day at noon, by which the clocks all over the United States are regulated. The wires of the telegraph companies and press associations, as well as those of the telephone companies in many of the larger cities, will be connected with the wires leading from the observatory for the purpose of transmitting this signal.

New York Avenue Presbyterians.

At the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church vigil service will be held, beginning at 11 o'clock, and closing at midnight. It will be a musical and responsive service upon "The Vapor." The special music will include Steyn's "Light of the World," Schaecker's "While With Ceaseless Course the Sun," Barnaby's "Crossing the Bar," and Gounod's "Ring Out, Wild Bells."

There will be a watch-night service at Faith Chapel, M Street between Fourth and a-half and Sixth Streets southwest. The exercises continue from 8:30 to 12 o'clock. Similar services are to be held in Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, beginning at 10:30 o'clock, and continuing until midnight.

Service at the Wesleyan Pentecostal Church, Ninth and D Streets northwest, will begin at 9 o'clock, and continue until 12 o'clock, under the direction of the Rev. H. E. Horsley, the pastor.

Services will be held at all the Roman Catholic Churches in the city tomorrow.

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